



LIBRARY
Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON. N. J.

No. Case, ~~8~~ ^{Director} P

No. Shelf, ~~8~~ 1

No. Book, ~~8~~

No. _____

TI

From the Rev. W. B. SPRAGUE, D.D. Sept. 1839.***

Sprague Collection. Vol. 449





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

AN ORATION:

SEP 28 3 12 295

DELIVERED AT

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, NOV. 16, 1824.

BEFORE THE

New-Jersey Colonization Society,

BY THE HONOURABLE

THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN.

Princeton Press:

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY, BY D. A. BORRENSTEIN.

1824.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

IN pursuance of a call made by the Board of Managers,
a Meeting of the **New-Jersey Colonization Society**
was held on the 16th instant, in the BOROUGH OF PRINCE-
TON, on which occasion THE HON. THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN
delivered the following **ORATION**.

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY.

On Motion of the REV. DR. ALEXANDER, *seconded by*
the REV. DR. MILLER,

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of the Society be presented to the
Hon. Mr. Frelinghuysen for his eloquent Address,
and that he be requested to furnish the Society
with a copy for publication.

UNCLASSIFIED

... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

An Oration;

&c. &c.

FELLOW-CITIZENS.

IT has become my duty, in behalf of the New-Jersey Colonization Society, to present to your consideration, an object, which deeply concerns us as a nation and as individuals. I desire to exhibit its claims plainly and faithfully.

You are already apprized, that for several years, the American Colonization Society has been engaged in establishing a Colony on the Coast of Africa; to serve not only as an asylum for the victims of the Slave Trade, who might be rescued from their cruel spoilers on the ocean, but also as a home for the Free people of colour in these United States. This Colony is now located. It has lived through many trials and difficulties and as we firmly believe, wants only the cordial co-operation of the American people, to fix it upon a permanent basis, and eventually to effect the complete emancipation of the African race.

It has encountered much opposition and more obloquy. But in view of these, it is a delightful exercise to trace the leadings of Divine Providence, in the regulation and conduct of human affairs: to remark from what unpromising causes, often flow the most stupendous events, and through what discouragements, the most glorious earthly objects attain their full accomplishment.

Had a cold, calculating philosopher sat in judgment upon the auspices of American Liberty, when our fathers projected that mighty purpose ; with the confidence of mathematical certainty, he would have predicted defeat and disgrace to so wild and extravagant a scheme. He would have reasoned profoundly from cause to effect, and on every page of his political theorems, pointed to the omens of disaster. Yet the triumphant issue of that purpose, for forty years, we have rejoiced to commemorate.

That was the cause of freedom. And my Fellow-Citizens, she has other claims. As if to exemplify the strange contradictions in the human character, here, where liberty has flourished with singular prosperity—where our hearts have been warmed into enthusiasm around her altars—here, by the pillars of her noble temple, has grown up a polluted idol, relieved by no virtues, and more odious and remorseless than the Juggernaut of the Heathen. On the same breeze have been borne to the ear, the grateful shouts of American Freemen and the heart-sickening groans of subjugated Slaves.

It is time to awake. After all the ingenious sophistry, which selfishness has enlisted in the service of this abominable traffic, conscience bears one uniform conviction to the heart, that Slavery can not be justified : and while exigencies of circumstance may properly prevent its prompt abolition—yet the duty of *gradually* removing so tremendous a curse, presses upon us with all the weight of eternity ; and we rejoice to know that the delusions which have made it tolerable, are dissolving before the light of Truth. The gloomy cloud, which has hung for ages over this unhappy people, is already streaked, with some cheering rays, that betoken a bright and glorious morning—a morning that will only reach its meridian splendour in that auspicious hour, when from Maine to St. Mary's, its beams shall not rest on a single soul in bondage.

Among the most formidable prejudices, that have tended to repress all exertions for the amelioration of the Slave, has been

the strange notion, that the African was incapable of improvement ; that there was an indescribable something about his natural and moral conformation, that forbid all hope of his elevation—that in truth, he was born to be a slave. Not only have the partial and imperfect experiments of philanthropy repelled this calumny upon Providence, but permit me to inquire, what has occasioned any discouraging symptoms on this subject ?

We enslave, degrade, and oppress a people through many generations—shut out from them all the avenues to skill and science—let scorn point its steady finger at the whole race—and then we merely let them go, merely say to them, “ now live and breathe for yourselves, without our aid or countenance ; and because they cannot enter upon, and maintain a career, which white men have learned to course by the unremitting cares and labours of the nursery, the school, and the college, they are put down as blanks in creation. It is as unjust, as it is unreasonable.

Violently force away from all their privileges, a Colony of white men, and to run a nearer parallel, in the disruption, break the dearest ties of nature and friendship ; load them with chains ; hunt them down as outlaws ; let the systems of their education and domestic economy, be studiously directed to break their spirits, enervate their minds, and frown away all generous emulation ; and in what rank in the scale of moral existence, think you, five generations, would place them ?

Give the African fair play. Let his functions have full scope ; enlarge his sphere of enterprise ; open to his elevated views, the road to fame, and honourable distinction ; and then judge, whether his head or his heart be below our standard.

Let Toussaint, Christophe, Petion, and scores of other distinguished men in science, let the flourishing Colony of

Sierra Leone, where *fifteen thousand* souls are now living under the influence of Gospel Light and rational liberty, enjoying the privileges of the most favoured civilized Societies; and exhibiting in domestic and public life, talents and virtues, that would not disgrace any village in America; silence forever this cruel prejudice.

It may not be unseasonable, at this time, to recollect, that we have entertained erroneous sentiments on this momentous subject, in relation to our Southern Fellow-Citizens. I fear we have sometimes felt indignant, when our sympathies would have been more fit. And, have we not claimed, in a spirit of too great complacency, the honour of breaking the shackles of Slavery, when emancipation was attended by no dangers? Our laws could safely proclaim liberty to the captives. No mother's bosom felt alarm, and the sleep of the cradle was not disturbed.

But cast your eye over the cities and plantations of the South, and ingenuously tell me, can you, in mercy to themselves, ask of our brethren to deluge their land with the horrid scenes that would certainly follow the liberation of a licentious, ignorant, and irritated population restrained by no principles, and with every bad passion of the heart inflamed. It would in effect, be to ask of them, after unsheathing the sword, to place it in the grasp of rapine and murder, and invoke their vengeance.

Let us not forget, that duty depends on relation and circumstance, and when purely abstract in its influence, often wastes itself in the wildness of fanaticism.

Suddenly to emancipate the millions of the South, or to raise them to the proud dignity of Freemen, in the bosom of their white Society, is not their duty. It would be the madness of self-destruction.

But the stern necessity, that forbids it, portrays in burn-

ing characters, the awful enormity of the evil, and furnishes the most cogent plea for the claims of this Society. Let us not be afraid to meet the mischief in all its measures. It is the first step towards a radical reform. It is true then that no domestic palliatives, no purely internal regulations can reach it. As American citizens, these men never can be free. And as American freemen, they never would be valuable. Prudence and self-preservation forbid the one, and prejudices, that seem implanted in the very constitution of our nature, would for ever prevent the other. Look through New-Jersey. We have long had on our rates a respectable number of Free blacks. The last Census rose to *twelve thousand*.

The experiment has been fairly made.

No people have been more enthusiastic than ourselves. Perhaps I wrong our sister States of New-York and Pennsylvania. They have for many years laboured with a generous ardour in this cause; some of their best men, have taken a noble stand on the side of Christian principles. Their pulpits have justly brought to bear on the subject that holy charity, which hails a brother in every child of Adam. Their rostrums have echoed with the equal rights of man. Their text has been taken from the Charter of American Liberty.

But what are these unhappy men, and where are they after all the toils of benevolence? A separate, degraded, scorned, and humbled people. With a line of demarcation drawn deep and broad; and durable as time.

But shall this reproach of free-men be perpetual? Shall we continue an evil of so deadly a type, that the last efforts of philanthropy only aggravate its character? To relieve the embarrassments of so gloomy a dilemma, had become the subject of great anxiety with the judicious and reflecting friends of Africa. They perceived, that slavery, with all their exertions, was still a modified curse—that the manacles and chain had indeed fallen from the slave—that he was no longer

the beast of burden and the prey of the cart-whip ; but the soul was still in bondage. The fond hope that she would expand with the blessings of freedom and under these kindly skies rise to the dignity of intelligence and virtue had been painfully disappointed : and as if a sun-beam had pointed the only way to complete redemption, the restoration to the land of their fathers, struck the attention and awakened the interest of a few distinguished philanthropists.

And in the front of these, Robert Finley, a name dear to science and piety, with a sanctified and ardent zeal, appeared to press the claims of his afflicted fellow-men. And it is among the happiest incidents of a life, much indebted to his early counsels, that a grateful pupil is permitted on this interesting occasion, to offer a tribute of humble praise to his venerated memory, and raise my voice in a cause that was cherished in his latest prayers. It was a project, as novel as it was bold and magnanimous. Its difficulties overwhelmed the timid and desponding—they ridiculed it as the vision of disordered benevolence, and predicted disappointment and disaster to all their plans. But the men who planned, and who have hitherto sustained this colony, were not to be intimidated by difficulties—they possessed an energy of character and purpose, that only rose in strength, as obstacles rose to obstruct them.

They determined to establish a settlement of manumitted slaves on the coast of Africa ; and I rejoice to assure you upon the most satisfactory authority, that the plan is practicable. It is demonstrated by actual and successful experiment. A colony of free and happy Africans, are now enjoying the delights of home and a rational existence, under the protecting auspices of this Society. The honoured men who have stood by this struggling settlement, through its darkest periods have indeed experienced ridicule at home and disasters abroad ; but with untiring energy and patience they have prosecuted this sacred enterprise. They committed their cause to God, and He has brought them triumphantly through the embarrassments,

which try the faith—and discipline the patience in every noble effort.

The desponding predictions of those timid spirits, who only feel secure while they can keep the eye upon a guide post, or beacon ahead, have been signally thwarted by the happy results of this project of genius and humanity. At this very moment, nearly *three hundred* American slaves are conducting the economy of police and government, at the American Colony of Liberia. No finger of scorn there, to drive back to the heart, the rising emotions of manly independence—no invidious contrasts to keep in constant remembrance, their degradation, and to extinguish every hope of elevation.

They feel and act and labour as men—“they have now a stake in the hedge”—the soil which they cultivate is their own—they feel incentives to honourable exertion, springing from every domestic relation—and when the husbandman, brushes with his early footsteps the morning dew, his walk is the stately step of a conscious free-man. Let it not be supposed, that we view in any other light, than that of an honourable co-operation the liberal and magnanimous offers from the President of Hayti—we bid them God speed—but we must still be permitted to urge the superior claims of the National Society—as embracing a much greater compass of good—more extensive in its influence, and more fixed and permanent in its objects. And besides, the trespass was committed against the continent—and to the continent, let retribution be made. Here it was, that a father’s tears were wrung by human cannibals, tearing from him the child of his old age—then it was, that distracted mothers, groaned and supplicated and cried for vengeance—and there let America pay her recompense. Let the same canvass that bore from her shores, her stolen children, revisit that ill-fated country, with her long lost wanderers. Suffer not the ardour of a just and enlightened zeal to be chilled by the suggestion that the plan and objects of this Society are chimerical. There is no obstacle in the way, that should for a moment depress the hopes,

or relax the efforts of good men in this cause. Avarice, has in twenty-five years, robbed from this suffering country, two millions of her children—and shall christian America, the favoured of heaven—the land of liberty, and enterprise, and charity, be told, that philanthropy, cannot achieve more than this wicked spirit.

Why, if Africa could now offer in the ear of heartless speculation, five hundred dollars a head, for each restored captive ; how would her vessels groan with the weight of crowded cargoes. We *can* accomplish this desire—already it begins to *animate* every bosom. We *can* send home to Africa all her sons—and we *must*—or endure a reproach that will be the shame and the curse of our country.

But, my countrymen, this Society languishes for want of your pecuniary aid. It is high time to act ; we have mourned over it—we have deplored it, as a national curse, that was by its weight sinking our energies : now a door of deliverance is opened. When Greece, subjugated by no fault of ours, lately sent to us her supplication—how was the appeal answered from every city and village ? Did Turkish despotism, rouse your sympathies ? Remember, that over Africa, the blackness of moral darkness has brooded for centuries.

Citizens of New-Jersey—we appeal to you—survey your cultivated fields—your comfortable habitations—your children rising around you to bless you. Who, under Providence, caused those hills to rejoice, and those vallies to smile ?—who ploughed those fields and cleared those forests ? Remember the toil and the tears of black men, and pay your debt to Africa.

We have injured, and we must make reparation—we have tempted the wicked cupidity of the slave dealer—we have fed and nourished—yes, glutted the maw of this infernal Moloch. It cried, men, fathers, and children—wives and mothers for *money*—and we—we responded, money for men ! It is recorded against us. And when America beholds, flaming from the

eternal throne, "The blood of injured Africa calls for Judgment," what must be our plea? Guilty before God. There can be no evasion then; the temporising systems of political expediency, will then have passed away—nothing but truth can stand the scrutiny of that searching inquest.

The proof will be resistless; the smothered groans of the slave-ships will come up to condemn us. Is there no angel of mercy, to stay the uplifted hand, and soften the frown of vengeance? Yes—oppressed, heart-broken Africa, clad in mourning for her children, appears and pleads, "Father forgive them;" they have restored my sons. No vultures prey upon the life of my children—the stain of blood has been washed away—the shrieks of kidnapped wives have ceased—and on Afric's happy plains have been heard the songs of salvation, and the voice of praise. I have forgiven, and I pray thee forgive.

And, moreover, a great design of this Society, concerns the temporal and eternal welfare of *fifty millions* of our fellow-men, on that benighted continent; whose dark places are full of the habitations of cruelty. The day has come, when our Saviour's injunction is no more regarded as a mystical legend, without meaning or authority. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," now exerts a kindred influence with the plainest behests of the Bible. In India, the Islands of the Sea, and our own Western wilderness, the devoted Missionary is proclaiming the Gospel of Peace, to the nations who sit in the shadow of death; and God has been pleased, by many distinguishing tokens of his favour, to own and bless these labours of love. And shall poor, bleeding Africa, stretch forth her hands in vain? Shall her appeal be made to us—to us, who have wronged and crushed her, in vain? It cannot be. And to evangelize we must civilize them. The mists of moral and intellectual darkness still rest upon this unhappy race; the vices of ignorance sunk them below humanity, and prepared them for bondage—and we loved to have it so. We have reaped the harvest of blood and wretchedness—we know better. A gracious and benignant Being had

planted us amidst Sabbaths and Bibles and the lights of science. Our intercourse, for the last century, has been constant with her coasts. Every breeze wafted to their shores our vessels, from the land of Freemen, We sent men—men that had hearts to feel at *home*; but when they reached the Congo and Senegal, did they *ever* feel, could they plead there for mercy on human misery? Did they ever open to that deluded people, the way to peace and virtue and heaven. Did they ever tell them how happy Christians lived, and what a treasure they might find in the Bible? Did one of them ever take his stand against the wasting scourge, and in the name of an offended God, say to the destroyer, stay thy desolations, it is treason against nature? Did they ever yet, my countrymen? And is it not time?—What object on this side of eternity, presents more solemnly interesting motives to engage our concern?—And the process by which to achieve it, is as simple as it is powerful. Every cargo of emancipated black men that you send home, will be the pioneers of their benighted countrymen—may be the instructors of their youth, and the preachers of righteousness. And when as Christians, you remember that the word has long since gone forth, that Ethiopia shall yet stretch forth her hands unto God. When you behold the mighty movements of Providence, that seem to lead right on the way to those glorious periods, when a nation shall be born in a day. What more can you need to urge your zealous and efficient co-operation. What more to encourage your prayers?

Christians, as you love your Bible, pray for Africa—and as you love your country, pray that the Lord would awaken *ten millions* of freemen, in one united, decided, and persevering effort, to relieve us for ever from this national reproach.





